DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 257 151 CS 504 913

TITLE	Seminar on the Role of Communication in the Euro-Arab Dialogue, Cairo, December 18-21, 1983.
INSTITUTION	Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Bonn (West Germany).
PUB DATE	Dec 83
NOTE	75p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Collected Works - Conference Proceedings (021)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Communication (Thought Transfer); *Communications; Foreign Countries; *International Relations; *Mass Media
IDENTIFIERS	*Arab States; Egypt; *Europe; Information Flow; Media Role; Middle East; New World Information Order; West Germany

ABSTRACT

Presented in this booklet are descriptions of the sessions at a seminar on the role of communication in European-Arab relations, organized by the German Friedrich Ebert Foundation in collaboration with the Ministry of Information of Egypt. Following an introduction and a list of items on the seminar agenda, the booklet describes the opening ceremony. The six sessions are then described as follows: (1) progress or provocation by the New World Information Order; (2) the history and future of the Middle East News Agency; (3) radio; (4) television, and the role of regional radio and television organizations research, documentation, and training; (5) alternative communication channels, and development of a national Arab communication policy; and (6) open discussion. The booklet concludes with highlights of the discussions and recommendations and a list of seminar participants. (HTH)

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SEMINAR ON THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION IN THE EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE CAIRO: 18-21 DECEMBER 1982

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Introduction

In collaboration with the Ministry of Information of the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation organized from 18 through 21 October 1983 in Cairo, a seminar on the role of Communication in the Euro-Arab Dialogue.

Personalities from the various sectors of Information and communication, officials of Arab, European and international news agencies and university specialists in communication participated in the proceedings of the seminar.

It was gratifying to note the participation in this seminar of men from the field of Information and Communication coming from several Arab countries, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Union of National Radio and Television Organizations of Africa (URTNA), UNESCO and the Economic Commission for Africa.

The seminar was organized within the context of the International Year for Communication.

At the end of the proceedings, the participants in the seminar expressed their gratitude to his Excellency Mr. Hosni Moubarak, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt who received them on Tuesday, 20 December 1983 and discussed with them the strong links existing between the Arab and European communities and the importance of the pursuit and reinforcement of the Dialogue.

They also expressed their gratitude to Mr. Mohamed Safwat El-Sherif, the Egyptian Minister of State for Information for the personal interest that he showed in the proceedings as well as in the results.

The seminar consisted of an opening ceremony and five working sessions in the course of which items on the agenda were discussed. A closing ceremony was also held during which the final report was read out.

Items on the Agenda

* New World Information Order: progress or provocation.
* The role of Arab News Agencies as well as foreign agencies operating in the Arab World.
* The role of radio in the reinforcement of the Euro-Arab dialogue.
* Current conceptions of the role of television.
* Research, documentation, training and permanent training programmes.
* Information activities and communication alternatives (role of syndicates, political parties and organizations).
* Communication policies at the national and international levels.

* * *

The Opening Session

The opening session was held on Sunday 18 December 1983 at 18 hours under the chairmanship of Mr. Mohamed Safwat El Sherif, the Egyptian Minister of State for Information. Also present were Mr. Reinhard Keune, Head of the Mass Communication Department of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and Mr. Axel Schmidt Godelitz, the Resident Representative of the Foundation in Egypt.

More than two hundred representatives of the Media responded to the invitation, some of whom were directors of radio and television organizations, professors of journalism at Egyptian universities as well as Arab and foreign correspondents in Cairo. The Egyptian press, radio and television amply covered the event.

In addition to the delegates, the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Egypt was present at the opening session as well as press attaches of several Arab embassies in Cairo, representatives of the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and several journalists and university professors from the Federal Republic of Germany.

At the opening session, Mr. Axel Schmidt Godelitz, the Resident Representative of the F.E.S. in Cairo took the floor to thank the Egyptian Minister of State for Information for having accepted to co-sponsor the seminar and for the warm welcome accorded to the participants. Mr. Schmidt Godelitz

emphasized that the organization of this seminar by F.E.S. fell within the framework of cooperation between the Foundation, Egypt and the rest of the Arab world in the field of communication. This cooperation has existed since the 1970s when the Foundation began to participate in the regional programmes, co-productions and in the exchange of TV news among Arab States through ASBU and the Jordanian Television Service. During this period, 400 officers working for Arab Televesion services were trained in Cairo and Amman. This served as a strong basis for the cooperation of experts in programme exchange through the Arab satellite which will be launched in the near future.

Mr. Schmidt Godelitz, also remarked that the city of Cairo has always served as a privileged centre for organizing seminars on radio and television programmes for the rural areas and for adult education. An important project has been carried out in Cairo in collaboration with the Middle East News Agency. Cairo has equally hosted in 1977 the Second International Conference on Broadcasting and Information, which constituted a prelude to the setting up of a New World Information Order. It was thus very logical to see the Foundation once again in Cairo pursuing regional cooperation within the framework of Euro-Arab dialogue in the field of communication.

On his part, Mr. Mohammed Safwat El-Sherif, Minister of State for Information of the Arab Republic of Egypt, welcomed the participants before going on to thank the Friedrich Ebert Foundation for organizing the seminar. He then unfolded the Egyptian strategy in the field of Information as drawn up in

1980 including the right of the Egyptian citizen to Information and the principle of social justice which confirms the right of every citizen to education and culture. He cited the achievements made in this field such as the extension and reorganization of radio and television networks and the setting up of three local radio stations out of the ten envisaged in the plan. Concerning the role of communication in the Euro-Arab dialogue, Mr. El-Sherif confirmed that the communication links between Egypt and the rest of the sister Arab countries had never been broken. He reviewed the multilateral cooperation existing in the field of programmes and cooperation existing between Egypt on one hand and Oman and Somalia on the other, as well as the integration of Egyptian and Sudanese information services which will lead to the setting up of the first joint broadcasting station in the Arab world "The Nile Radio Station". From the national point of view, Mr. El-Sherif called for the coordination of communication networks as a first step towards regional communication integration.

In the second part of his speech, Mr. El-Sherif touched on the role of communication in the Euro-Arab dialogue indicating that this role has always been limited. He reviewed the fields of cooperation between Egypt and the European Broadcasting Union and the Intelsat satellites network as well as the efforts made towards subscribing to the European television network "Eurovision" and to participate in the retransmission and exchange of news through the new European satellite. He also emphasized the importance of Egyptian cooperation with the Asian and African countries in the field of Information and further stressed the importance of bilateral cooperation with European countries such as the Federal Republic of Germany.

France and England.

Mr. El-Sherif indicated that, in spite of all the efforts so far made, cooperation in the field of communication has not been reflected in the Arab-European economic and social relations. He mentioned the historical, political and economic factors that have hindered the development of cooperation in this sector and the fact that the European individual received the wrong information of the Arabs. This situation constituted an impediment to Euro-Arab dialogue.

He next spoke about the implications of technological advancement in the field of communication, particularly the future of the present communication technology and the possibility of it becoming obsolete and the lot reserved for the poor countries that will not be able to follow the evolution at the world level as well as the effects of the communication revolution on the change of concept of social responsibility of the media ; the effect of the technological revolution on the great gap existing between the North and the South, the possibilities of protecting people from the effects of technological transfer which is built on different values. He thus proposed to international organizations to draw up a code of ethics for international communication.

He added that the Arab communicators must be sincere to their European friends and start by putting things in order at home. Without a joint Arab front with coherent information policies both in form and content, they could never establish a meaningful dialogue with their European and other partners.

At the end of his speech, Mr. El Sherif paid homage to the dynamic Palestinian people, the Lebanese people and the people of Irak. He also paid homage to the Information officials of Sudan, Somalia, Oman, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Tunisia, Qatar, the Gulf area and the rest of the Arab countries.

Mr. Reinhard Keune, Head of the Communication Department of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation extended the sincere greetings of the Foundation's Council to the participants in the seminar. He started by saying he viewed the Egyptian Television news which he could have viewed in his country. It proved how important it was for each party to be informed on the crises and the conflicts in the two parts of the world while avoiding to replace information by propaganda and seeking to put emphasis on the reciprocal points of interest. He specified that the Euro-Arab dialogue had so far made only a small progress. However, communicators had the duty of initiating an awareness and informing people of each party's problems and priorities.

He went on to talk about the conference of Arab States Broadcasting Union which was held in 1971 in Cairo and the discussions on the exchange of TV news by microwave and satellite. They constituted the prelude to a new World Information Order even before the international community started its debate on this issue. Mr. Keune added that, at the time that the Arab satellite was about to be launched, it was expected more than ever that Arab reflections and ideas be

made known for a better and appropriate utilization of the new technology to the benefit of the Arab World and the Euro-Arab dialogue.

* * *

First Session

Theme:

The New World Information Order: progress or provocation?

Chairman of the session:

Mohamed Kamal
President of the Jordanian
Television Service

Speakers:

Mr. Yehia Aboubakr
Mr. Reinhard Keune
Mr. Hamdy Kandil

Presenting the speakers, the chairman spoke of the efforts made by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation towards the consolidation of Arab-German relations.

An Arab Perspective

Mr. Yehia Aboubakr defined the special position of the Arab World with its cultural and economic dimensions as well as its bearing in the field of communication, with special reference to the right to communicate.

He next stressed the links between the right to communicate and the means leading to its implementation as well as the style of presentation. Mr. Aboubakr also dwelt on information processes, the channels, the tendencies and the progressive or retrogressive forces. He remarked the danger of dependency in

the field of communication and the much required more just and more balanced World Information Order. He went on to say that it constituted a matter of concern for both governments and communicators. Noting that the Arab world has succeeded in increasing its communication exchanges at all levels, he regretted that the present context has not made it possible to ensure a global coordination of actions. However, there are examples of what might be considered as successful sub-regional coordination. He also stated that the Arab space communication networks offered various possibilities for constructive dialogue.

Besides, Mr. Aboubakr spoke of the recent change in Europe's treatment of events occurring in the Arab world such as the coverage of Lebanon.

According to him, the dialogue with Europe has led to a wave of decentralization of information services as seen in the proposed local broadcasting stations and Information programmes directed towards communities in need of specific services.

Concerning news exchange, he stressed that the imbalance weighs heavily on the Arabs in spite of the justification put forward by Europe. He also observed that the setting up of communication technology in the Arab zone was not carried out as planned. Thus, there are still programmes with cultural contents and forms imported from Europe while there is no reciprocal effort in Europe to receive from the Arab world programmes with Arab human values.

With reference to training, he emphasized that the situation

would have been better had some Europeans not continued to train people from the developing countries by "creating them in their image" in spite of the fact that most of the trainees are aware of the need to safeguard their cultural identities.

He ended his intervention by stating that, in general, the position of the Arabs vis-a-vis problems of communication did not constitute a provocation as claimed by those in favour of maintaining the status quo and who were opposed to the New World Information Order. He expressed his conviction that, as far as the Arabs were concerned, each step taken in this direction constituted a real progress toward meeting a real social need which is the implementation of the right to communicate.

The chairman of the session then made his comments stating that the major problem lay with the Arab world and as long as the Arabs do not put things in order at home, they will never win the respect of the others.

A European Perspective

It was next the turn of Mr. Keune to take the floor. He stressed what he had said a year ago in Nairobi when he said that the North-South dialogue on communication problems and the new World Information Order had entered a phase in which no major progress was expected in the near future. He then wondered whether the situation had changed in the course of the previous year adding that apparently the question remained without a specific response. He specified that the Friedrich Ebert Foundation had western vision about the new World Information Order. The western countries

favour a free press and support the principle of the free flow of information among states having different political, economic and social systems and understand the various needs and priorities in most of the countries of the South.

Mr. Keune stressed several factors attesting to a positive progress and evolution, particularly the successful universal experiment of TV news exchange initiated by UNESCO, INTELSAT and the Arab, Asian and African broadcasting unions despite some loopholes which were not easy to avoid. The Third World countries, from China in the East to Senegal in the West, have, for the first time, proved that it was possible to exchange TV news among southern countries without passing through the Western agencies. There is also the non-governmental Third World News Agency IPS which has stood firm against the violent attacks which nearly paralyzed it, as well as the Panafrican News Agency (PANA) which sent out its first despatches at the beginning of this year. The Organization of Asian News Agencies, on its part, has made some progress in extending its news network. One of the most important news items this year may be the decision taken by the Asian Broadcasting Union to start, as from January 1984, daily TV news exchange among ten of its members. All these facts can be considered major achievements in line with the new World Information Order. However, on the other hand, the United States continues warning UNESCO about the implications of the New World Information Order and conservative representatives of the West have been trying to pool their forces in order to prevent the implementation of a new world order. These circles continue to feel that such an

order can only be considered as provocation. Attempts are being made through the use of Intelsat satellites and others to add new monopolies to the old at the expense of the Third World. At the same time, the acquisition of re-transmission rights for world sporting events is taking a new trend which is so much based on commercial tendencies that one wonders whether only the rich should, in the future, be in the position to pay for the rights of direct re-transmission of such events.

Mr. Keune went on to say that the greatest obstacles to the implementation of a new world order come, according to him, from the Third World itself. He mentioned the example of the Panafrican News Agency which went through considerable difficulties a few months after the launching of its activities as a result of delay in payment of membership dues. Political divergencies among the Arabs also, make it difficult for the Arab States Broadcasting Union and the Arab League to pursue the dialogue with Europe.

He concluded by saying that when communication becomes a fundamental issue for the Third World, the New World Order will become a progressive reality and not a provocation as some believe it to be.

UNESCO Perspective

Mr. Hamdy Kandil took the floor to thank the Friedrich Ebert Foundation for its efforts towards the development of a new Information Order between the Arabs and Europeans even before the official call for this order.

He centred his intervention on the findings and resolutions of the 22nd session of the General Conference of UNESCO which

came to an end a few weeks earlier, particularly those pertaining to the New World Information and Communication Order. He stated that now that the negative aspects of the quantity, the content and the direction of the flow of news between North and South are being observed, it will be a mistake to think that the New World Order will be limited only to news. Even worse than the situation concerning the flow of news, there is the question of specialized technical data of which 80% are in the possession of only 10% of the world's population. He called for a global vision covering telecommunication systems and the new communication technology. He said that these technologies have influenced the positions of several parties, including western Europe. He cited the stand of European countries on direct broadcasting satellite, particularly the Luxembourg Satellite project "Luxsat" which has been scheduled for broadcasting TV commercial programmes adding that the fear of what is referred to as cultural aggression has started to gain grounds in the smaller European countries and in Canada.

He went on to analyze the positions of various countries on the New World Information Order praising the remarkable stand of France. Furthermore, he criticized the wide gap between the North and the South concerning communication capabilities. In the North, there are, for instance, cable systems with a hundred television channels and one country transmitting about 2000 hours of programmes in 50 languages and has a ready market for publicity worth between 35 and 100 billion dollars per annum. There is also a company whose annual income from renting computers is reported to be a 100 billion dollars. In this same Northern zone, the European

broadcasting stations pay 40 million dollars as re-transmission rights for the Olympic Games. Mr. Kandil stated that it is this situation-and not the call for a new order-that constituted the provocation. This is all the more true when we consider the fact that the countries that called for the setting up, in UNESCO, of an International Programme for the Development of Communication have contributed very little, he said. This explains why the budget voted for this programme this year does not exceed 1.5 million dollars.

He added that, through this programme and other activities, UNESCO will continue to carry out its work until the voice of developing countries is able to reach the whole world with their points of view. He equally condemned the campaign carried out by some newspapers which claim that UNESCO was trying to put information under the control of governments. According to him, UNESCO was working for real freedom characterized by plurality, diversity, decentralization and open-door policy towards other cultures and other peoples. The call for freedom should not be the monopoly of only one party. He equally praised the actions of journalists working for the freedom of information in the underdeveloped countries. This freedom should closely be linked to the sense of responsibility as defined by the journalists themselves.

At the end of his intervention, Mr. Kandil called on Europe to pay to the Arab world not only what it owes as material debt resulting from the exploitation of resources at the time of colonization, but also to pay for the intellectual debt to the cultural contribution made by the Arabs over several centuries. He concluded by saying that the Arabs were not seeking

affection but understanding; they were not soliciting aid but asking for balanced cooperation.

A general discussion followed this presentation. According to Dr. Ahmed Saoui, a face-to-face confrontation must be made with frankness and clarity. He added that the United States was to a large extent responsible for the imbalance in the flow of information and the intellectual invasion. At the same time the European countries have been engaged in attempts of intellectual and cultural invasion against the Third World.

Dr. Kunzcik called for the creation of an atmosphere in which the various points of view would be accepted.

Dr. Fawzia Fahim, on her part, stated that the Western press agencies only showed interest in news from developing countries when it served entertainment purposes.

Mr. Fatih Tidjani specified that the appeal for a new World Information Order had led to requesting aid for infrastructure development in the Third World, amounting to 7.5 million dollars. Only 1.5 million dollars were approved. He wondered whether this could be considered as dialogue aimed at setting the basis of a new World Information Order. The problem is not limited to the free flow of information. It concerns mainly the policy of a cultural plunder practised by the Western World. He called for a new vision of the new order based on the vision of Arab realities. According to Mr. Tidjani, it is not a question of starting a cultural war but rather to work closely together.

Mr. Hamdy Azam then took the floor to emphasize that the phase of conflict had outlived its usefulness. The time has come

for information taken in the real sense of development of the society. The Arabs have begun to open channels with European institutions. The Europeans do not have the patience to wait for the evolution of the Arabs. The latter are asking Europe to understand their interests and their claims.

Engineer Salah Amer pointed out one weakness, namely that technology was always ahead of communication policy. However, in the case of Arabs the project was the product of a guiding policy that was defined since 1967. He added that in the future, there will be a lot of problems between the North and the South and that for DBS, the Arabs and the Europeans shared a common field of spectrum which makes it imperative to coordinate broadcasting and coverage. What is even worse is that Israel will soon launch satellites which will have repercussions on Arab information. Mr. Amer went on to say that advanced technology had dangerous side effects and that it was important to carry out a dialogue on this matter which requires lots of studies.

Mr. Mohamed Ali Shennaoui emphasized that the Arabs had contributed cultural values to Europe and that Europe must pay the debt in the field of communication. He also stressed the need to differentiate between news and information. In his opinion, the Arabs need European aid in the fields of information and technology. He also raised the question of the role of Europe in helping the Arabs to reinforce the communication at the local level to make the voice of the Arabs heard by Europeans and to present to them news items coming from the Arab world in the right manner.

Mr. Hassan Saad El Din stated that the Arabs wished to have

a balanced flow of information between the North and the South, which constituted an objective that cannot be attained in the course of this century. He added that it will be an important achievement for the Arabs if they succeed to acquire the impartiality of the European media. He also said that the Western media did not give adequate coverage to the vital projects carried out in the Sudan.

Mr. Tarek Abdelkader, on his part, felt that it was first of all necessary to have an Arab-Arab dialogue. Concerning Arab-European dialogue, an agreement must be reached that it should be an economic dialogue and not political. Talking about the imbalance of the flow of information between the Arab and the European countries, Mr. Tarek Abdelkader specified that the Arabs are requesting from Europe what they should have requested from themselves first of all. According to him, the Arabs were giving too much attention to local news or accidents and disasters.

* * *

Second Session

Theme: The Middle East News Agency: Past, Present and Future

Chairman of the session: Mr. Abdeljalil Findjiro
Principal Speaker: Mr. Mustapha Nagib.

Mr. Mustapha Nagib spoke about the present and the future of the Middle East News Agency. He gave a short introduction on the history of the Agency before touching on its objectives, evolution, performance, cooperation links with the other agencies, particularly those of the non-aligned countries, African news agencies, as well as the aspirations and future perspectives of the Agency.

Mr. Yehia Aboubakr read a message sent by Mr. Farid Ayar, Secretary General of the Federation of Arab News Agencies. The message stressed the important role played by the Arab news agencies in the economic and political life of the people. It also mentioned the firm conviction of the Arab authorities that the new political situation demands that national agencies should replace the international agencies as much as possible.

Mr. Ayar also stated that the Arab agencies paid much attention to the Euro-Arab dialogue. They had started a dialogue with the European agencies with a view to establish direct relations with them and to enlarge the field of direct news exchange between the two parties. He remarked that in 1976 the general cooperation framework was defined. The second

dialogue meeting was held in 1977 before the Euro-Arab seminar for the Directors of News Agencies held in 1981 when, with a common accord, was agreed upon and a committee for the follow up of the recommendations was constituted with the decision that the Federation should set up the first Arab centre entrusted with the responsibility of transmitted news from Vienna. He expressed the hope that the fourth dialogue meeting would be held in the near future.

Mr. Neu spoke about the organization of the German News Agency, DPA which was not engaged in profit making activities and was not subjected to any governmental influence. He also spoke of the cooperation of the German agency with the Arab news agencies stating that the DPA believed in the need and the duty to inform the Middle East on the aspects of life in the Federal Republic of Germany. He added that the German News Agency supplies and presents sports and cultural pictures on Germany and it hoped to perform fully in the Middle East. This constitutes its role in the dialogue which is also carried out through its Middle East correspondents. He added that it was necessary to accord facilities of access to information sources in some Arab countries.

On his part, Mr. Abdelhamid Bejar spoke of the Latin-American News Agency IPS which was mostly interested in matters of development and has about twenty offices spread all over the world. He specified that the Agency did not receive financing from any quarters whatsoever and it collaborates with numerous national news agencies and transmits three news casts in Arabic, English and Spanish. Its central office is in the Italian capital.

A general debate ensued in the course of which Mr. Ahmed Taher remarked that the Arabs received news from India and Pakistan only through European agencies which, in general, are only interested in tragic news from the Third World and neglected news on development efforts. These same agencies eliminate much of the details concerning information from the Third World and only cover what pleases them. Mr. Taher believes that the Arabs desire to have a dialogue but the other party is not psychologically prepared for it.

Doctor Ahmed Saoui, on his part, would have wished to hear the Chief Editor of the Middle East News Agency speak about the obstacles which prevented the Agency from carrying out its mission of communication through the Euro-Arab-dialogue. He mentioned that the Agency was certainly independent but not as independent as the press.

Dr. Fawzia Fahim raised the question of difficulties encountered by the representatives of the Middle East News Agency in the developed countries. She also asked what the Agency's opinion was as regards transforming an agency of an under-developed country into an international news agency.

In response to these questions, Mr. Mustapha Nagib stated that the Agency faced difficulties but there was a permanent dialogue and the representatives of the Agency covered all international meetings. Mr. Nagib added that the Agency was independent in the sense that the news reports transmitted by its network were not censored. Concerning the difficulties referred to by Dr. Fawzia Fahim as encountered by the special correspondents of the Agency, Mr. Nagib made it clear that they were material difficulties. With reference to the

transformation of the Middle East News Agency into an international agency. Mr. Nagib quoted from a UNESCO report that classified the Agency in the fifth position on the international list. It is a developed regional agency which only faced material problems.

Mr. Hamdy Kandil insisted on the need to widen the scope of the discussion. He found it normal that news agencies in under-developed countries depend on their governments. It is not easy to set up a news agency with private capital. There are some Western institutions which are financed by their governments to carry their voices to the outside world. He specified that the criterion for the freedom of news is the existence of a free press that expresses the views of the opposition.

Mr. Abdel Jalil Findjiro mentioned that the Arab Maghreb News Agency had lived through fourteen years with the capital provided by Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. It was, however, unable to fully establish itself inside nor outside the Arab Maghreb. The Government of Morocco thus decided to turn it into a state instrument which it fully provided with equipment. He finally stated that no private agency can live on its own means in the developing countries.

* * *

Third Session

Theme: Radio
Chairman of the Session: Mr. Mohamed Ben Dedouche
Principal Speakers: Mr. Amin Bassiouni
Mr. Reinhard Keune

Mr. Amin Bassiouni presented his paper entitled "The role of Broadcasting in the Euro-Arab dialogue". He stated that the Euro-Arab dialogue is a permanent necessity in the interest of the two parties, binding them together through fixed and permanent factors such as geography, neighbourhood, history and economy. This is why the dialogue must be continued regularly within the multilateral and bilateral frameworks and based on balanced links in the interest of the two parties.

Mr. Bassiouni's paper brought out clearly the essential role of radio in integral development and the basic function that it must accomplish in Europe as well as in the Arab countries which must get to know each other at all levels, particularly with reference to resources, problems and aspirations. This will go a long way to facilitate mutual understanding.

This paper also stated that it was high time that the Arab zone played its role in the communication revolution with the aid of Europe. It is necessary for each party to forego its prejudices and wrong impressions which constitute an impediment to mutual and right understanding. Broadcasting in Europe must pay an attention to Arab literary and artistic works.

Mr. Reinhard Keune spoke about the Franco-German satellite which was to be launched soon. He stated that one of its channels will be reserved for broadcasting from 16 stations of which 12 will broadcast full programmes and the four others will be specialized services for programmes such as music and including one for information. He added that it reflects a new technology which should influence the content and have its impact on the services presented in Europe.

Dr. Fawzia Fahim remarked that Nehru had stressed the need for human beings to speak to each other in the language of his soul and mind. She further remarked that the Arabs understood the language of the West and received a lot of things from Europeans whereas the latter cannot understand the Arab civilization in the same way as the Arabs understand theirs.

Dr. Ahmed Saoui raised the question of the possibility for the Arabs to address themselves through radio to Europeans in their language as well as the question of the role that a local broadcasting station can play towards the achievement of such an understanding.

Mr. Ahmed Taher, on his part, insisted on the need to turn a new page with the exchange of news and data being carried out between the South and the North on equal terms.

Dr. Mustapha Hadjaj remarked that external broadcasts very often expressed the policies of a country in a given language. He also mentioned that it would be unjust to turn this form of broadcasting into a means of enriching Euro-Arab dialogue.

Mr. Mohamed Ben Dedouche raised the question of the body

which should be entrusted with this mission. In reply, Mr. Ahmed Taher said that the alternative to external broadcasting would be the exchange of programmes which should be lively and fruitful. Dr. Hadjaj added that the exchange of programmes could be one of the means to that end but mutual understanding will be spontaneously and positively carried out through the media.

Mr. Hamdy Kandil made a comparison between the words written on the entrance gate of the British Broadcasting Corporation and those written on the entrance gate of the Indian Broadcasting Corporation. The words at the B.B.C. express unlimited freedom of speech whereas those at the I.B.C. stipulate fighting against all the adverse winds coming from outside. He then spoke of the distribution of radio frequencies which had taken place before most developing countries attained their independence. Thus 90% of frequencies are under the control of the major powers from the East as from the West. He also affirmed that as long as the under-developed countries are unable to have an equal share in the electro-magnetic field, it will be difficult for them to make their voices heard.

Furthermore, Mr. Kandil touched on the role of radio in the teaching of languages and how necessary it is for a radio correspondent to speak the language of the country where he works. He referred to the Arab satellite and its use in radio as well as its role in the Euro-Arab dialogue saying that this should receive due consideration.

Dr. Magi Halawani proposed the setting up of a powerful Arab Radio bringing together the efforts of all the external services of the Arab broadcasting stations. This will be more

beneficial to the Euro-Arab dialogue than individual efforts.

Mr. Yahia Aboubakr raised the following points:

- There is need to take into consideration the fact that the main function of radio is gradually changing to news and recorded music.
- Radio is not the only medium of communication available and it cannot be isolated from the other media.
- However powerful external broadcasts to the outside world may be, the western listener can never be influenced. Even if it is possible to reach Europe through powerful transmitters, the quality of programmes capable of attracting the listener constitute other problems.
- Radio has an important role to play in development. However, its contribution to Euro-Arab dialogue will not be significant unless there is an exchange of programmes and certainly not through direct listening.
- To join efforts for setting up of an Arab external radio service is not practical. It would be more expedient to coordinate the activities of Arab broadcasting stations in this field leading to a measure of integration.

Mr. Saad Labib remarked that it would be difficult to imagine a sizeable audience for news from external radio services. In this field we are treating the European listener of TV viewer as a local listener. This constitutes a loop-hole and ignorance of the most important aspect of the communication process. He gave the example of the study carried out by UNESCO on the reasons for the lack of interest of the western listener in the news broadcast by the Gulf News Agency. It

became clear that the news values did not fall in line with the pre-occupations of the listener in question and were simply characterized by formality. Furthermore, there is a tendency to ignore the basics of news techniques. Mr. Labib insisted on the importance of using the appropriate broadcasting language, more so because new styles have sprung up and there are news formats other than merely reading a news bulletin.

Dr. Kunzcik raised the question of the accuracy of the presentation that would make European intellectuals convinced of what is offered to them. Should this element be lacking, they will turn towards other sources. He also remarked the need to admit the existence of a conflict of interests between the two Arab and European parties. Thus the means of communication should not be contained in local soliloquy. It is important that the media must widen their broadcasting scope of news from the other party even if they are in contradiction with their stands. This will go a long way to enrich the dialogue.

Engineer Farouk Ibrahim centred his intervention on the distribution of frequencies. He remarked, that a meeting would be held in Geneva for the distribution of short and high frequency waves during the two 1984 and 1986 sessions. The aim of these sessions is to review the present situation of frequency distribution and to give equal chances to all administration as well as to avoid jammings. Mr. Ibrahim stated that this conference offers a fine opportunity for enriching the Euro-Arab dialogue on condition that there is the good - will and real cooperation among the administrations. He also remarked that the European Broadcasting Union was helping considerably towards organizing another conference for the distribution of FM frequencies. Mr. Ibrahim added that

the Arab satellite has transponders which offer the possibility of broadcasting for 10 radio channels of high quality production. The Arab countries would be able to use it to improve communication among themselves.

Mr. Mustapha Nagib stated that the western listener was mainly interested in music and songs. This explained why he did not show interest in Arab external broadcasts. He must be allowed to have confidence in Arab news broadcasts and to develop the habit of listening to the Arab stations.

Mr. Mohamed Shennaoui touched on the language problem which he considered to be an obstacle to the development of the Euro-Arab dialogue. He said that the dialogue should be based on common economic and cultural interests. He also suggested the adoption of a recommendation on local news coverage and a regional broadcasting system which could play an indirect role in the Euro-Arab dialogue. This role, he said, can, however be very efficient in the sense that it contributes to the development of the Arabs as individuals. He called on the German friends to give all possible help in this field. Mr. Shennaoui finally suggested the adoption of a recommendation on the exchange of programmes among the regional broadcasting stations of Egypt and their German counterparts.

Engineer Mahmoud Kishk on his part, remarked that the discussion centred on Europe as the source and the producer of technology whereas in this field it lagged considerably behind in comparison to the United States and Japan. He also opposed the idea of exchanging programmes in foreign languages among regional stations.

Mr. Mohamed Ben Dedouche stated that there were 9

regional broadcasting stations in Morocco and he spoke in the same line as Mr. Mahmoud Kishk concerning the exchange of programmes to be used in these stations.

Mr. Mohamed Sh naoui remarked that the scientific implementation of th concept of regional broadcasting puts the listener in three circuits: first the creation of local and regional enthusiasm; second the accomplishment of a balance between regional enthusiasm and loyalty to the nation; third the awareness that the citizen belonged to the big human family.

Mr. Hamdy Azam stated that in Germany there were twenty-two regional stations and one international station along with a national service. The latter, he said, is by far less important when compared to some regional stations.

In addition to programme exchange, Mr. Keune proposed the formula of co-production.

Mr. Hamdy Kandil drew attention to the importance that must be accorded to Arabs working in Europe and to their needs in the field of communication. He stated that UNESCO will put emphasis on this point in the coming two years and would like to collaborate with the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in this field.

Mr. Amin Bassiouni brought the discussions to a close saying that he tried through the paper he presented to incite a discussion on the role of radio in the Euro-Arab dialogue and that international broadcasting and programme exchange could help in this direction. However, it was necessary, first of

all to develop the national broadcasting system which constitutes the basis of the dialogue. The dialogue is in itself an objective but must also lead to the two parties getting to know each other better with open minds and heart.

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Fourth Session

Themes:

- **Television**
- **The Role of Regional Radio and Television organizations**
- **Research, Documentation, Training and Continuing Training.**

Chairman of the Session : Mr. Hussein Enan

Speakers:

- **Engineer Farouk Ibrahim**
- Mr. Abdelkader Marzouki
- Mrs. Nawal Serri
- Dr. Samir Hussein
- Dr. Kunzcik

At the opening of the session, Mr. Hussein Enan thanked the Friedrich Ebert Foundation for organizing the seminar specifically at that time when the Arab world was pre-occupied by the issue. He then stated that remarkable dialogue and cooperation existed between Egypt and all the radio and television organizations, institutions and unions of the whole world. This cooperation covered all the aspects of communication, training, programme and news exchange and co-production. He also mentioned that the dialogue was continuing and had not been interrupted between Egypt and the Arab countries as well as between Egypt and Asia and

Africa; a dialogue with North and South. He concluded his introduction by stating that there was need to reinforce and intensify this dialogue to cover all aspects of communication.

Satellites

Engineer Farouk Ibrahim presented a paper entitled "Analytical Approach to Arab and European Communication Technology with the Help of Satellites". The document presented defined the various levels of audio-visual communication by satellite at the international, regional and national levels; also at collective and individual levels. The family of international satellites of the INTELSAT system and its successive generations, he said, will remain the major source of supply of international communication services. Egypt, given its geographical position will be able after the completion of the 2nd earth station, to increase its present direct communication capacities with both the Indian and Atlantic satellites.

After the introduction, the paper dealt with the Arab Satellite, its characteristics and advantages, the European satellite and the Nile Valley satellite, a project drawn up within the framework of the integration of Egypt and Sudan. For the latter, the first feasibility studies were being carried out to be sure of its economic advantages before its completion for direct broadcasting in the beginning of 1990. The paper also stressed the need to coordinate the programmes of the earth stations with those of the space sector. Furthermore, it stressed the need to study, in the shortest possible time, the measures pertaining to the exchange of TV news and programmes with the

European Broadcasting Union, Eurovision and the European Satellite particularly concerning the equipment of the earth sector.

URTNA

Mr. Abdelkader Marzouki then took the floor to present the background history of the Union of National Radio and Television Organizations of Africa and the services it rendered to the member states in the fields of programme exchange and the direct retransmission of sporting events. He also spoke of the experiment that was carried out by the Union in collaboration with UNESCO, making it possible for eight countries to exchange TV programmes successfully, through satellite. He then reviewed the field of cooperation between the Union and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, particularly the project that was to be launched in Cairo for the training of journalists on electronic news gathering.

TV and North-South Cooperation

Mrs. Nawal Serri presented a paper on the theme "Television and North-South dialogue". She referred to the background history of the Euro-Arab dialogue which the Europeans had conceived at the economic level whereas the Arabs' conception was political. Nevertheless, the dialogue had yielded fruitful results, the most important of which was the change in the European perception of the Arab. There has been an improvement. Instead of being perceived as a consumer buying goods, he is now viewed as a partner at work and in common thinking and planning. She then went on to cover the role of television as a medium of communication before coming to

touch on how the Arab States have been able to administer and direct the earth stations of the satellites manned by Arabs. Mrs. Serri also spoke of the forms of news exchange between the Egyptian Television and the Arab States. Through this exchange, important services were rendered to the Arab television stations. Finally, she spoke of the cooperation with the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in organizing seminars for Egyptian, Jordanian, Malaysian and African TV representatives.

Communication Research, Documentation and Training

Dr. Samir Hussein presented a paper on "the Problems of Research, Documentation and Training in the Field of Information". The paper emphasized the need to use scientific methods in planning, implementation and evaluation of findings. On this score, special attention must be paid to research work in the field of information and mass communication.

After giving a general definition of information research concept, he touched on the controversy brought about by the question of research in information and its role in development. The paper brought out some guidelines to the research in information with a view to discover variables which have some impact on information.

The document then touched on the problems facing research work and affecting its effeciency in application in the field of information, particularly in underdeveloped countries. Problems of methodology were also brought up for discussion. Dr. Samir Hussein also dwelt at length on the problem of

documentation of the results work and their exchange at the national, regional and internatonal levels. Finally, he touched on the question of training which is very much lagging in most underdeveloped countries. These countries suffer from considerable lack of highly qualified human resources in the various fields of communication.

Communication Research and Society

Dr. Kunzcik spoke of the role of the media which should not be dissociated from the state policies in various fields. In his opinion, research work in the field of communication must well define, right from the start, its social objectives. He insisted on the need to allow unlimited flow of news in order that they may contribute to the reinforcement of reciprocal knowledge. He emphasized the importance of the collaboration between those who have the mission of training Arab and European research workers.

Mr. Ahmed Taher starting the discussion, considered it impossible to know the exact feedback that a programme can generate in Europe. Even if the listeners have a certain request, gate keepers, he said, would oppose it. He wished that research work should be considered whithin its natural demensions.

Dr. Ahmed Saoui thanked Mr. Farouk Ibrahim for the information furnished in his paper concerning satellites.
He also expressed the wish for the completion of the Egypt-Sudanese projects. He touched on the same point as did Mrs. Nawal Serri stating that the Euro-Arab dialogue started with an economic concepton for the Europeans and a political conception for the Arabs. He called on Dr. Samir Hussein in his

capacity as Dean of the Faculty of Mass communication to see to the implementation on the suggestions on the orientation of research work as well as the study of effects and reactions.

According to Dr. Fawzia Fahim who commented on Dr. Kunzcik's statement that communication could not be dissociated from society, the two super powers own the technology whose influence they have started to fear. Referring to Mrs. Nawal Serri's paper she remarked that the Arabs would be transmitting less than what they will be receiving. This situation is very dangerous, she said. She stressed further the importance of training in developing countries.

Mr. Keune insisted on the importance of training and the need to get into touch with countries of Latin America concerning centres of research documentation. Finally he stressed the importance of market research and the need to ascertain the tastes and quality requirements before the production of programmes for the target markets.

Mr. Hamdy Kandil raised the following points:

- It is hoped that the satellites will not be used for military purposes but rather for the spread of peace and communication among peoples leading to the establishment of better relations and understanding.

- The Arab States should define their policies concerning signals that might be received from unknown satellites when direct broadcasting starts.

- The experience of Upper Volta which stopped its television

transmission for three days due to lack of appropriate local production is highly appreciated.

- In the field of building, launching vehicles, it is necessary to hail the progress made by Europe which has become a third world power after America and Russia. This can liberate not only Europe but also the countries of the Third World from dependence on the two super powers.

- In the field of space communication technology and in particular, the construction of earth stations and equipment, the Arab World missed a great chance by not having a collective tender for the construction of earth stations in their region.

- The Arab States must benefit from the experiment of the unified European programme broadcast at the same time in all the European countries and should consider a similar Arab experiment.

- The experiment carried out by URTNA relating to the exchange of TV news among Asian, African and Arab countries must be considered with a view to launching, for the first time ever, a new experiment extended to cover the European countries.

Mr. Saad Labib corrected what was recently published about the Arab satellite, by saying that the signal from the satellite will not be received in individual homes. It will be received only by stations which will have the possibility of choosing what they want. Direct broadcasting is contemplated for the Integration Satellite (Nile Valley Satellite). Mr. Labib pointed to the fact

that all the meetings concerning the Arab satellite were held within the framework of the Arab League in Cairo with the participation of all parties concerned or interested. After the headquarters of the League moved to Tunis, the meetings were interrupted. They were resumed later in Tunis where Arab institutions concerned started to plan the use of the satellites for broadcasting and educational purposes. The exchange of services through the Arab satellite will start with uncontroversial services such as news, sporting events, Arab and Islamic history and cultural subjects. Mr. Labib stressed that the meetings were held in the absence of an official Egyptian representation. Furthermore Egypt has not started the construction of the earth station which will take about two years. There are, however, some alternatives: Sudan may receive the signal from the Arab satellite and transmit it to Egypt or the signal from of the Arab satellite to Egypt may receive the same treatment as the postal and aerial communications which were not affected by the situation between Egypt and the other Arab States.

Mr. Labib concluded by saying that the various parties were ready and it was up to Egypt and to the Chairman of this session in particular to work in that direction.

In his intervention Mr. Mahmoud Kishk referred to what was said by Mr. Yehia Aboubakr concerning the indeginization of communication technologies adding that "we must use our resources to reach that aim instead of being mere consumers".

Dr. Mona El-Hadidi said that the presence of this number of Arab specialists should be utilised in adopting a

recommendation on cooperation among the mass media and institutes and faculties of communication in coordinating research. She also stressed the need for a recommendation on making available to specialists research work carried out within the framework of Euro-Arab and South-South dialogues.

Mr. Hussein Enan stressed the cooperation between the Radio-Television Union of Egypt and the Faculty of Mass Communication. He added that this cooperation will be further developed and that the Council of Trustees of the Union had decided to appoint a supervision from the Faculty of Mass Communication to each research work carried out by the Union.

Dr. Ilham Khalil presented a paper on her work published by the University of Amsterdam which constituted her work for her PhD degree on "the Arab Satellite".

Fifth Session

Theme:

- Alternative Communication
- Towards a National Arab Communication Policy

Chairman of Session: Mr. Fatih Tidjani

Principal Speakers: Mr. Sayed Al-Tahiri
Dr. Ahmed Al-Saoui

Mr. Sayed Al-Tahiri dealt with "alternative communication". He stressed the importance of Trade Union organizations in Western Europe, stating that worker's organizations have their weight as popular pressure groups. He also stressed that the dialogue with the Europeans should depend on logic and the presentation of true and documentary facts making use of seminars, open discussion, photo exhibitions and documentary films as well as brochures and other publications. Speaking about the content of communication, he stressed that the channels of alternative communication were complementary to convential channels. Alternative communication can be useful in non-political fields, particularly in workers education and economic and social development. At this point, information has to use some conventional channels in addition to its own channels. With illiteracy so wide spread, broadcasting has greater influence on the people. In the same manner the workers theatre for example

can serve as a means of communication. He added that the preoccupation with production and development has spotlighted the urgent need for specialized labour information and communication. Finally he underlined the interest accorded to workers information by the Arab Labour Organization as well as the specialized seminars that it has organized and which have led to positive results.

Dr. Ahmed Saoui spoke on the theme "Towards a National Arab Policy on Communication". He said that in the course of the second half of the 20th century, communication has attained a universal dimension under the influence of political, economic and social factors as well as the technological revolution. He dealt with the problems created by the new situation and which have led to the movement calling for the setting up of a new world information order, which will help the Third World attain a certain measure of equity. He also referred to the efforts of UNESCO in this field, which were well received by the countries of the Third World but which, at the same time, have raised discontent in Western circles.

Speaking about communication with the Western world, Dr. Saoui said that Arab countries were clearly in an unfavorable position. He added that the Arab world will soon be ushered into a technological revolution with the launching of the first Arab communication satellite. The Arabs must draw up a unified national communication policy aiming at reducing the size of the one way information flow and replacing it with a free and balanced flow. The Arabs must also coordinate their national and regional information policies. After reviewing major issues which require the drawing up of a unified Arab

communication policy. Dr. Saoui said that some Arab countries were in need of technical assistance from the developed countries in order to develop their communication systems while others need material aid. The Arab world as a whole needs self-help in improving its systems and in adopting a national policy that will contribute to the establishment of the New World Information Order.

In the course of the discussion Mr. Mohamed Ali Shennaoui wondered for how long the invasion and domination of Western information would continue to be felt in the Arab media. He said that the Germans were the closest European people to the Arabs and their responsibility was therefore to help establish a balanced information flow in both directions and to help in the fields of training and technology. He added that regional broadcasting stations may possibly protect the people from the effects of cultural invasion and that he hoped that the Germans and UNESCO would contribute in accelerating the achievements of these broadcasting stations.

Dr. kunzcik on his part said that American TV serials presented a distorted image of the Arab world and that it was the same with the Germans who were presented as cruel and stupid people. He added that the role of television differed from that of radio and that the television viewer always had in front of him a strange imported image. He expressed the opinion that television must meet the needs of the local public in producing appropriate programmes. He spoke of an American study which remarked that, under the influence of the media, most of the developing countries liked to live a life identical with that of the industrialized countries. He added that television would, under such circumstances, be the most psychologically harmful

medium, driving people to frustration and revolt.

Mr. Abdeljalil Fanjiro stressed the point that apart from Western films, there were films from the Eastern block with the same negative effect on the Arab masses. Such films should be censored and measures should be taken to ensure that Arab domestic production attained acceptable levels which requires more freedom of script, audio and video. He added that the idea to set up a joint Arab News Agency will remain utopian as long as the political determination does not exist. It is however possible to set up an Arab information pool and this must be encouraged. As far as Western cultural invasion is concerned, the call for the rejection of Western production should the West reject Arab production was, according to Mr. Fanjiro, unrealistic. The Arabs do not have the means of implementation and they cannot impose their production until it reaches an acceptable technical level.

Mr. Yehia Aboubakr remarked that the West was not negligent in reporting the Sabra and Chatila massacres and gave them ample coverage while the Arab media lagged behind. This situation, he said requires further analysis and study. Speaking about "Communication policies", he remarked that the credit for this phrase goes to UNESCO and that policies should be coordinated at the national regional and international levels. Besides, the regional and international aspects of the matter are linked to flow problems within a given state, between this same State and its neighbours and the rest of the world or between a regional group such as the Arab Nation and the other regional groups. This problem requires careful study. Concerning alternative communication Mr. Aboubakr

commented on Mr. Tahiri's reference to communication outside the classical channels through mass organizations such as trade unions saying that this type of communication has led to a new terminology including popular communication which is carried out through new conventional channels. This involved political parties, professional organizations and other nongovernmental organizations. Mr. Aboubakr stressed the need to study how such organizations exchanged information and their need for new training. He added that within the framework of its cooperation with the Egyptian trade unions, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation offered the possibility of training in this field. Mr. Aboubakr also said that such organizations could use the present channels and other means that could have an effect on the form and content of the messages communicated.

Mr. Mohamed Kamal, on this part, stated that the accusation that the Arabs were victims of Western information media, was a matter that should be carefully studied. In his opinion, it was a matter of cultural differences. It would be necessary to find the main reasons behind the European attitude towards Arab causes.

Mr. Fischer made the same remarks as Mr. Aboubakr concerning the coverage of the Sabra and Chatila events. He also remarked that Dr. Ahmed Saoui used such expressions as domination, cultural invasion with military connotations. He made it clear that there was no reason to imagine a battle between the two sides and that news were even sent from Egypt to Arab countries through western agencies.

Mr. Saad Labib commented on the use of the word

"invasion" in the field of flow of information. He remarked that a lot of people rejected this expression and considered it an insult to the Arabs. He preferred the use of the term "substitution" in the field of information and culture. Indeed, there was a great volume of western production that the Arabs inadvertently consumed and this led to substitution of their own national values by other values. Mr. Labib said that UNESCO had undertaken a new study on the flow of information in the world. Seven Arab countries were chosen for the study. The preliminary results have shown that the situation had not considerably changed. The volume and the sources of information remained the same. The Arab research team was disappointed by the small volume of information available on content of broadcasts. This has led research workers and planners to rely on personal observations and previous studies more than on research work. He proposed more reliance on communication documentation made available to research workers involved in the planning process. Mr. Labib added that the question of domestic production is linked to the flow of information and that it is important to handle the production carefully in form as well as in content to guarantee a standard of quality not lower than that of imported programmes. Speaking about communication planning he remarked that it was necessary to take into consideration its international dimension. He concluded by saying that the West should provide more efficient channels for the flow of information from the Third World.

Mr. Mustapha Nagib, said that dialogue presumes the existence of two parties. He remarked that the West should

present the Arab point of view faithfully and objectively and offer material assistance for training, particularly in the field of technology. He added that the West blamed the Arabs for some measures of control and censorship of news while in the West symptoms of the same problem do exist and news blackouts are occasionaly imposed.

Mr. Mahmoud Kishk and Mr. Fischer supported Mr. Aboubakr in saying that the European media had not failed to attach great importance to the tragedies of Sabra and Chatila. Mr. Kishk added that the Arab satellite could be a very efficient instrument if appropriately used. This satellite, he said, could be the first step towards the setting up of a unified Arab broadcasting network.

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Sixth Session

Open Discussion

Chairman of the Session: Mr. El Fatih Tijani

This last session was set aside for an open discussion of the general theme of the Seminar. At the end, Mr. Saad Labib read the final report prepared by the team of rapporteurs.

Mr. Hamdy Azzam opened the discussion by saying that the Euro-Arab dialogue had fallen to its lowest level and that the Seminar could not jump over the political reality. He went on to say that two trends of thought came up in the course of the discussion. The first reflected the importance of the Euro-Arab dialogue while the other reflected the need for an Arab-Arab dialogue. This is a significant message to all Arab and European communicators, he said. Speaking of the Arab abroad he said that it could not be compared to the image in the 1960s for example.

Concerning technology and training, he remarked that they constituted areas which were not fully discussed by the Seminar specifically the transfer of technology and appropriate technology for each country. Some people participants expressed the opinion that the Arabs could master all new technologies whereas the Europeans thought

that the new generation of technology was too sophisticated for them. He then wondered whether the Arabs were in a position to absorb the technological evolution in its entirety and whether the tendency towards applied technology was, for specific reasons, a result of pressure of industry. He also raised the question whether, in the field of training, there were possibilities of passing directly to the new generation of technology.

Dr. Mustapha Hadjaj remarked that there was an attempt to blame all the Arab communication problems on the European media. Equally there was something like a sense of guilt in the European reaction concerning presenting a wrong image of the Arabs. "Both attitudes are wrong", he said. The truth is that two different mentalities had come into contact: the first is sentimental while the other is practical and programmed. It would be impossible to expect each of them to renounce its roots. He raised the question whether it was possible and by what means to reconcile them. He added that the Western media had some positive aspects and that the Arabs should set up communication and continuity that would lead to mutual understanding.

Mr. Fadlallah Mohamed said that he doubted the capacity of the Arab unions to carry out effective action adding that the first step that should be taken was to inject new dynamism into the Euro-Arab dialogue within the framework of mass organizations. In this direction, communicators must play their role by various means.

On his part, Dr. Mahmoud El Jawhari remarked that the Euro-Arab dialogue should not be merely theoretical but should be realistic and practical, clearly put across the Arab problems to European organizations. It is necessary to evaluate what had been done to be able to identify the causes of successes and failures and to attentively pursue the development of technology in the West.

Mr. Hamdy Kandil remarked that the expression "Communication policy" had been rejected in the past but has come to be accepted. He added that the drawing up of communication policies could not be left into the hands of governments alone. All those interested in matters of communication and public affairs should be involved. He wondered whether there could be a unified communication policy for the Arab world. In reply to this question, he said that it was not possible under the present situation. It would not even be desirable. In the same way, it would not be possible to set up a united news agency, a united broadcasting service, or a united voice for the Arab nation abroad. According to him, what was possible was only coordination. Mr. Kandil remarked that there were still good signs for the movement towards a unified Arab Nation. All Arabs have the national approach. They complain of the presentation of a distorted image of Arabs outside, while among themselves, each of them distorts the image of the other. It was important to start by correcting this situation. There is a need to start to put things in order at home, coordinate the Arab action before turning towards Europe. Finally, he spoke of the need to grant preferential tariffs for news transmission between Europe and the Arab region.

Mrs. Erdmute Heller then took the floor to speak about the complaints made about the presentation of a distorted image of the Arab world and the Islamic world in Europe. She remarked that ten years ago it was not easy to defend the Palestinian cause or the Islamic culture in Germany. There had been a slight change after the 1973 war. She added that the presentation of a distorted image of the Arabs was mainly due to a lack of experience and information and that a readiness exists now to improve the situation which the Arabs should encourage. On the other hand, she said, there is a shortage in Germany of journalists who are specialists in Arab affairs but Europe is, however, conscious of the importance of the Arab world and of cooperation with the Arabs. She finally remarked that, concerning radio and television in Germany, there is a Council on which concerned groups are represented. It is necessary, she added, that the two million Arabs living in Germany are represented by Arabs.

Engineer Farouk Ibrahim remarked that the duty of communicators in the technical field was to absorb modern technologies, follow up their evolution and participate in their development.

With regard to electronic industries, he remarked that their introduction into Egypt dated back to 1960. Now Egypt has qualified manpower able to participate in the development of modern technology. There is no country that has the monopoly in this field but rather there is inter-dependence and exchange of experience.

In his comment, Mr. Mohamed El-Shannaoui said the

intervention of Mrs. Heller confirmed that European media was subjected to pressures.

Mr. Keune then took the floor to say that he did not think that there was a Western attitude biased in a given direction. There are simply some institutions that are capable to control some situations. With regard to Western information, there are individual networks which came together under one umbrella to facilitate news exchange and co-production. It was therefore necessary to seize the opportunity offered by Europe, particularly Germany and Switzerland where a lot of people desire to have a dialogue with the Third World. Mr. Keune added that it was important to have a good start in correcting the distorted image of the Arab World. Various groups in different areas should be contacted and reached. He also said that in his opinion there was one aspect which was not sufficiently discussed and this was the question of communication planning. Concerning the transfer of technology he said that there was an obsolete technology that should be replaced by another more advanced technology adapted to the social conditions of the countries building the modern installations particularly those serving satellite communications.

The Chairman Mr. El-Fatih Tidjani remarked that Dr. Ahmed Saoui did not elaborate on the problems of communication in some Arab countries. Most Third World countries, he said, suffer from weaknesses of communication infrastructure besides shortages in their media structures. He referred to Mr. Kandils remark on the impossibility of finding an acceptable national formula in the field of communication

policies saying that there is at least a minimum to reflect on when professional ethics have the upper hand over unethical politics.

Touching on the capability of the Arabs to absorb the last or the last but one generation of technology and the doubts expressed concerning this matter, Mr. Tidjani pondered over the situation of Japan 30 years ago and the situation today. He also wondered why the nuclear reactor of Irak was destroyed and why the Arab scientist Yehia El Meched was killed in Paris.

Mr. Sayed El-Tahiri stressed the need to establish an Arab-Arab dialogue. He said that if there was dialogue among the Arab mass organizations and the Arabs were able to surpass their present political divergencies and then renewed the dialogue with Europe on non-controversial issues, they will win the respect of the other party and mutual understanding will be much easier.

Dr. Saoui remarked at the end of the discussion that it was high time to set up a provincial press which would not be like those newspapers speaking in the name of local government. He added that it was said during the Seminar that Europe was exposed to influences from other forces in the field of communication, which was quite true. For, he said, there was an information infiltration in Europe as well as in the Arab countries. As for the diversification of information, Dr. Saoui spoke in favour of plurality whether concerning the East or the West on condition that the news content presented was vigilantly checked. He also spoke in favour of domestic

production in order to ensure balance with Western production. There was however need to operate a system of selection and careful control. Dr. Saoui added that through Arab organizations such as the Arab Journalists Union and Arab States Broadcasting Union, it would be possible to find a formula for Arab national policies free of contradictions.

Mr. Keune then took the floor to say that the findings of the Seminar should be considered as a starting point for the dialogue and not the end. He added that he would always remember a short statement made in the course of the Seminar which he considered to be a good motto. It stressed the need to hold face-to-face discussions on a broader scale. Speaking about the International Communication Year, he declared that in reality, a decade should be consecrated to communication. The discussions should not be limited to the end of this year. They should rather lead on to more communication.

Mr. Windfuhr then spoke of the Arab and Muslim image in Europe in general and in Germany in particular. He said that for political reasons, the Arab world had not done enough work in Europe, with the exception of some attempts which he discribed as sterile. For instance, he cited the receptions given by Arab embassies at which attempts were made to convince the German guests of the Arabs' points of view. He affirmed, however that the majority of Germans held a more positive than negative image of the Arabs. Some German newspapers he said, continued to publish some articles that were not in the interest of the Arab cause but most newspapers added a lot of corrections to the Arab image in general and a better view of

their political processes. Finally, he added that the best service that could be rendered to the reinforcement of Euro-Arab relations was to put across one's point of view and to hold discussions in order to attain the goal pursued.

At the end of the session the Chairman said that the Seminar could not be the last word in the Euro-Arab dialogue. It constituted rather an episode that started long ago and which will be carried on and repeated in the future. The Seminar was held in Cairo at a time when the whole of the Arab nation was facing threats which made Arab unity a necessity. It constituted a European contribution made by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation to accomplish Euro-Arab rapprochement. He expressed his gratitude to the Foundation which bore the name of a German who fought for freedom, justice and social solidarity.

The final report containing highlights of observations and interventions made during the discussions was read at the end of this session.

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Final Report

Highlights of the Discussions and Recommendations.

I- New World Information Order

- The right to communication must serve as the basis for defining national and regional communication and information policies. The media must be placed at the disposal of all social classes who should benefit from them and participate in their activities. This right is one of the basic human rights of individuals, groups and societies. It also constitutes the starting point towards a new world information order at the national, regional and universal levels.
- The discussions on the New World Information Order and the North-South dialogue must be carried out with a spirit of frankness and clarity, so that in the long run, it will be possible to guarantee free, just and balanced flow of information between the North and the South in general and between the Arab region and Western Europe in particular. The special and historical relations existing between the two regions made their present links a matter of priority in the context of the North-South dialogue in the field of communication. One of the main reasons for according a special importance to the Arab region along with neighbourhood and cultural relations established since the middle ages, is that the dialogue with the Arabs is

much easier than with other Third World countries considering the fact they constitute one cultural entity. The dialogue between the Arab and European cultures is desirable per se particularly because one of its first results is recognition by each party of the other's identity and aspirations. This will lead to cultural rapprochement without encroachment or the loss of cultural identity or an attempt to impose alien models and patterns.

- Communication technology constitutes one of the major elements of the dialogue. It is a fact of history that the developed countries dominate this technology. Consequently, it is their responsibility to help the Arab countries and the countries of the Third World in general, in the choice and adaptation of appropriate technology, in the rationalization of its use in the indeginization of technology and setting up industries required at the national and regional levels.

- Information is one of the basic issues related to communication. It constitutes a key element in communication and development processes in general. It is therefore important to draw the attention of the West to the danger of monopolizing specialized information and keeping it out of reach of the Third World and Arab countries. Such a situation may have negative effects on the North-South dialogue in the field of information and communication.

- As activities in the field of news dissemination constitute a major support for the North-South dialogue and in order to make Arab news stories acceptable to the European

public, the Arab media must recognize news values to which this public is used and should not try to alter these values with the risk of misunderstanding. News values are part of the cultural and social identity of the European public and nothing can oblige the media in Europe to accept news stories which do not conform to their values. In the short term, Arab newsmen must ensure that their news stories have the journalistic formulation required by the foreign public. In the long term, it is necessary to contribute seriously to a change of the Arab stereotype in Western minds in order to make news from the Arab World more acceptable especially positive news on development. It will also be necessary to convince Western newsmen of the need to pay due attention to such news stories. It will be worthwhile that Arab media show interest in the background of news stories in order that they may be understood by the Western public which needs a lot of background information to explain events in the Arab world and make them meaningful.

II- The Role of News Agencies

- With due consideration to the fact that news agencies in most countries of the Third World are official or semi-official agencies set up and run by state funds and that these agencies, without this assistance, could not have been set up in most cases, it is still in the interest of the news agencies, in the long run to honour the professional values. They must not withhold, delay or distort news. In this way they will acquire a high degree of credibility and become reliable sources of information for the Western media. This will not however prevent them from working within the framework

of the principles and objectives of their governments.

- This would require the government authorities in Third World countries to help their agencies by making available to them news "fit to print" and by not considering themselves the only source of information for these agencies. This will make it possible to diversify the sources of information.

- In accordance with basic communication principles, the Arab agencies must in their news casts to other countries, avoid news which are fit only for internal consumption and not external use due to their topical official nature, being only a protocol requirement. Such news will be of no use and will not be published by the Western media.

  It is also important, in editing news for abroad, to conform to the news values recognized by the European public as far as form and presentation are concerned.

- In meetings bringing together the Federation of Arab News Agencies and the European Agencies, it is advisable to convince the international agencies of the importance of according greater coverage to news stories from the various regions of the world and not to act as proxy for news agencies in countries of the South in the selection of news suitable for their own regions.

- In order to ensure the success of the dialogue and the cultural encounter between the North and the South, it will be equally important to convince international agencies of the relevance of Third World news stories on development

issues and not to content themselves with publishing negative information on crises and disasters.

- Furthermore, correspondents representing international news agencies in the developing countries should be conversant with the cultural, social and political framework of the people whose news they cover.

III - The Role of Radio

- Radio, as a medium of communication is not the only medium that fills the public's time and leisure. As a result, it cannot be isolated from the press, television or new media such as video. This has pushed several developed countries to review the function of Radio in this context. This question must be carefully studied by the Arab broadcasting services to guarantee the optimum social functioning of Radio.

Local and Regional Broadcasting Services

- Considering the important role of local and regional broadcasting services and their close links with the local public in Europe as in the Arab world; the Seminar found it necessary for these services to play an important role in the education of their publics, and to prepare them to accept the cultural North-South dialogue. These services can also be effective as a means of exchange of experience between Europe and the Arabs in the field of training.

Exchange and Co-production

- It is necessary to encourage co-production projects between Arab and European broadcasting organizations to reinforce the role of Radio in the North-South cultural

dialogue. With these co-productions, each broadcasting service should be able to broadcast the programmes in its national language, while the subject matter will be conceived of jointly with artistic and technical qualities acceptable to all parties. It is also worthwhile to encourage the exchange of some broadcasting content acceptable to both parties for independent treatment in their programmes.

Distribution of Frequencies

- The Seminar reaffirmed the need to ensure a more equitable distribution of the electro-magnetic spectrum during ITU conferences on redistribution of frequencies. The present distribution deprives Third World countries of their legitimate right to have their full share. Arab officials must coordinate and join their efforts with those of other Third World countries in the international forums where this matter is discussed. At the same time, Western countries must help the Arabs in this venture to eliminate one of the evils of the present order.

Emigrant Workers in Europe

- the Arab broadcasting services should acquaint themselves with the conditions of Arab emigrated workers in Europe in order to satisfy their cultural and information needs.

IV - The Role of Television

- Inspite of the importance of setting up the Arab space network, scheduled for 1984, which will increase communication capabilities among the Arab countries and between them and Europe, the fact still remains that the usefulness of this network depends on good preparation of

the service and the optimum use along with existing channels in supporting Arab communication capabilities regionally and internationaly. It is necessary that communication planning go hand in hand with technological planning to draw the maximum benefit from the present communication possibilities. In the same way, technical aspects of communication should be planned alongside with non-technic aspects.

- The Seminar welcomed the success attained by the Europeans in the field of satellite launching. By this great achievement, Europe has become a third power along with the two super powers and is capable of liberating not only the European countries but also Third World countries from their dependence on the monopoly of the two super-powers. This breakthrough is very important and will, in the future, serve the cause of Euro-Arab dialogue.

- The Seminar suggested to Arab television organizations to benefit from the European satellite experimentation on the production of a unified European programme broadcast simultaneously to all European countries. They are urged to study the possibility of launching an Arab experiment taking into consideration the results of the European experiment and other experiments on the common use of space networks.

- The Seminar also stressed the importance of studying the results of the experiment carried out by the Union of National Radio and Television Organizations of Africa on news exchange by satellite among Asian, African and Arab countries. The aim of such a study would be the extension

of this experiment to include the European countries.

- The Seminar remarked that cooperation between Arab and European television organizations has been developing successfully. However, this cooperation is often carried out in one direction, from European countries to Arab countries. Arab television stations must accord special importance to the production of programmes that can be used by European television, taking into consideration the area of interest and cultural characteristics of the European public. Quality of production is of great importance.

V- Research, Documentation and Training

- It is impossible to separate theory from experimental and applied research in the field of communication. In the same way, communication research cannot be conceived of without society in mind. Mass media can be viewed within the framework of interactive systems that include religion, politics, economy, education and all the other elements of the social structure. Within the framework of the debate on reinforcing the North-South dialogue in the field of communication research activities in the Arab countries as well as in Europe should include the following:

  * Identification of source of information used by the media and the information is used.

  * Content analysis of news carried by national and regional Third World news agencies.

  * Content analysis of the major media in Europe and the Arab region in as much as this content affects the image

of the Arabs and that of Europeans as presented by the media in both regions.

This research consists particularly of analyzing the content of television programmes as well as news carried by News Agencies in the Arab and European regions.

* A study of the criteria used by gatekeepers in their selections for the press, radio and television. This includes indentification of their editing methods and their news values.

* A study of the content of education in communication training institutes, particularly concerning professional values.

* A study of the effects of the image of the Arab or the European as probagated by the media on Arab and European audiences.

* Cooperation among communication researchers in Europe and the Arab region must be encouraged

- To promote the Euro-Arab dialogue it is important to give more training to journalists in methods of changing some stereotypes prevalent in both regions. This will be carried out by increasing reciprocal training opportunities in the field of communication sciences.

- The Seminar reaffirmed the need for cooperation among Arab media, faculties, institutes and departments of communication in coordinating communication research and exchanging results pertaining directly or indirectly to the Euro-Arab dialogue and the South-South dialogue. It further recommended the setting up

of regional centres to coordinate communication research works as well as the publication and exchange of research results. The Seminar welcomed the decision of the Board of Trustees of the Egyptian Radio and Television Union to assign a supervising professor from the Faculty of Mass Communication to each communication research it undertakes.

VI- Communication Policies and Alternative Communication

Both parties to this dialogue aim at better informing their peoples of what goes on in the world with more efficiency and more self reliance. To this end, the flow of information between the Arab countries and Europe should continue. A balanced flow should not be achieved by limiting the flow of information from Europe but rather by increasing and improving the flow from Arab countries to Europe.

Selection from Foreign Production

- It is necessary for the Arab media when selecting from foreign production, to ensure that the content is not contradictory to the cultural values of the receiving societies and to stop any attempt of cultural substitution. This however, should not close the doors of knowledge and exposure to foreign cultural production which can be useful in the process of cultural modernization and development while preserving cultural identity.

To this end, the Seminar concluded that it would be fruitful to diversify the foreign sources of information, in

order to break the monopoly of some foreign and multinational companies.

Domestic Production

- In order to correct the imbalances in the North-South flow of information, Third World countries, including the Arab countries, must increase their capabilities for domestic production in order to be less dependent on foreign imports, but domestic production should not be inferior, in standard of quality, to imported production in order to attract the audiences.

  It is also necessary to draw up communication policies for the Arab media in accordance with their production capabilities.

- It should be taken into consideration that publicity and advertising are integral elements of information and communication activities. Because of their very sophisticated production and presentation techniques, they have a great impact on audiences. As they have become major elements of the flow from North to South, Third World countries must be cautious in dealing with commercial publicity and treat it according to its possible economic and social consequences.

- With the aim of promoting North-South dialogue in general and the Euro-Arab dialogue in particular, the Seminar found it necessary to improve Arab information activities abroad by providing good materials which can be used by the media in target areas. The production of such materials must depend on thorough understanding of the conditions and frames of reference of the target

groups. It is also necessary to draw the maximum benefit from alternative communication through nongovernmental organizations, political and cultural groups and Arab communities abroad.

- It is also necessary to carry out a dialogue between the Arabs and the Europeans at the nongovernmental level through trade unions, professional organizations and other associations. These institutions should be able to use their own direct communication channels or specialized mass-media channels. This form of communication can usher a new style of formulating messages compatible with its reciprocal function.

Vote of Thanks

All Seminar participants expressed their gratitude to the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and the Egyptian Ministry of Information for their efforts in organizing the meeting.

The Seminar voted to submit copies of its report to His Excellency the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, to His Excellency the Egyptian Minister of Information and to all scientific organizations, institutions, faculties and institutes working in the field of communication in Egypt and the Arab World as well as to Arab, regional and international organizations concerned.

* * *

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